

Official Says CIA Could Help Firms Compete Overseas

By David Zizzo
Staff Writer

Central Intelligence Agency information may some-
day help businesses in the United States compete with
industry in foreign countries, a CIA official told Okla-
homa newspaper publishers Friday.

"Nearly every other country in the world uses its
intelligence to benefit and to advantage its own busi-
ness and we are going to have to ... look at that," CIA
Deputy Director Richard Kerr said. "That is a signifi-
cant issue."

Kerr told publishers attending the Oklahoma Press Association mid-winter convention that the CIA already works with American business by asking executives for information on their operations and contacts abroad. But he said it has not been CIA policy to provide information to business that would give industries an advantage.

Kerr said recent fundamental changes in governments of some countries and tensions in others around the world have increased the need for intelligence gathered by the CIA.

He cited coup attempts in the Philippines, the U.S. invasion of Panama and changes in South Africa. Of particular impact is the outbreak of democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, he said.

"It is impressive and it is revolutionary," Kerr said.

The CIA must gather information that can be used by American diplomats in negotiations on arms reductions and control and verification of compliance of arms treaties, he said.

The agency also must keep tabs on political and economic conditions in a country, as well as gauging military strength of adversaries and allies, he said.

"The plate is full," Kerr said of the CIA's responsibilities.

Kerr said he expects the Soviet Union to face major problems of ethnic unrest in its numerous provinces.

But he pointed out the CIA's role is not to make predictions, but to gather information with which to build a base of knowledge for use by U.S. policymakers.

Another CIA role is to hold terrorists in check around the world. Kerr said the CIA has not been 100 percent successful in that effort, but he said the agency has been effective in heading off many planned attacks.

"Our success there is (that) you do not see the results of terrorism," he said.

In response to questions, Kerr said the CIA still is following the plight of American hostages in Lebanon. But he said the fragmented struggle among various factions there makes any covert rescue operations very difficult.

"Lebanon is a place where no one can operate with ease," he said.

Kerr praised Sen. David Boren, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee,

for supporting the CIA.

George Tenet, staff director of Boren's committee, told publishers that committee members and staff have been successful in preventing leaks of sensitive information.

Tenet said the committee is composed of members from both political parties and he said partisanship has not played a role in the committee's oversight of CIA activities.

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
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